DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 250 617 CG 017 816

AUTHOR Ware, Mark E.
TITLE Developing Strategies for the Job Search.
PUB DATE Aug 84
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (92nd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, August 24-28, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Career Awareness; Career Counseling; *Career Development; *College Curriculum; College Students; Employment Opportunities; Higher Education; *Job Search Methods; Psychology
IDENTIFIERS Creighton University NE

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a career development course at Creighton University, which was designed to meet the needs of psychology majors. The course follows a three dimensional model consisting of increasing students' knowledge about themselves, their knowledge about the world of work, and their knowledge about job search skills. The course employs traditional lecture format, small group discussion, written assignments, videotaped programs, audiotaped materials, career inventories (the Self-Directed Search and the System for Career Decision Making), and skill development tasks. Grading is based on examinations and class participation. Career development opportunities for psychology majors is emphasized, including exploration of further professional training. (BL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED250617

Developing Strategies for the Job Search

Mark E. Ware

Creighton University

Presented at the meeting of the

American Psychological Association in Toronto

August, 1984

CG 017816

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mark E. Ware

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Developing Strategies for the Job Search

Approaches to meeting the career needs of psychology majors include a course in career development (e.g., Ware, in press) and a program in career development (e.g., Ware, 1984a). A three-dimensional model for meeting those needs consists of increasing students' knowledge about themselves (i.e., their interests, needs, values, and abilities), knowledge about the world of work and post graduate education, and knowledge about job search skills (i.e., decision making assertive communication, job hunting, resume writing, and interviewing). The model assumes that more accurate and extensive self and occupational awareness are pre-requisite conditions for increasing the likelihood of success and satisfaction in employment.

Surveys of students at a larger public and a smaller private university revealed that students gave self knowledge one of the lowest ranking among kinds of occupationally related infomation that they wanted (Lunneborg, 1983; Ware, 1983). Failure to complete the requisite step of increasing students' self knowledge has the danger of showing students what to do (i.e., get a job) without teaching them how to do it (i.e.,

the process). At some future date, when students find themselves ready for a career change, they can find themselves unprepared to initiate and implement the process effectively.

Because of a tendency to underemphasize or ignore the pre-requisite conditions, i.e., knowledge about self and the world of work, the manuscript describes a career development course that employs the three-dimensional model. In addition, I will provide suggestions for those who might be interested in developing a career development course.

Career Development Course. The course consists of three components corresponding to the three objectives of the course. The objectives consist of increasing knowledge about one's self, about occupational and post graduate educational opportunities, and about job search skills.

The course employs traditional lecture format, small group discussion, written assignments and exercises, locally produced videotape programs and booklets, commercially produced audio-visual materials, career inventories and out of class skill development tasks. This multi-dimensional approach to the course highlights the instructor's effort to engage the

students at as many levels as possible and the belief that significant learning occurs in association with relevant materials and practical problems (Rogers, 1969).

The course requires at least two short answer essay examinations. The results of the tests constitute about 40% of the final grade. The basis for the remainder of the grade involves class attendance and participation, and the quality and timely completion of assignments.

The class meets for 50 minutes, three times a week for 14 weeks. Several, structured paper and pencil exercises guide students in exploring and clarifying their values, interests, and abilities. Figler (1975) provides excellent illustrations of the types of exercises an instructor can use. Exercises are completed outside of class. Small group, in-class discussion of the results of the exercises fosters student disclosure and peer support.

The administration and interpretation of two career inventories stimulate exploration of personal characteristics and of occupational alternatives. Students complete the Self-Directed Search (Holland, 1974) and the System for Career Decision-Making

(Harrington & O'Shea, 1980) during the first and second half of the semester respectively. Moreover, students use paper and pencil assignments to evaluate the degree of match between their interests and abilities and their prospective careers. The students use the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (1977) and the Occupational Outlook Handbook (1982) to conduct an in-depth investigation of and to write reports about four careers. Students select two careers from the results of each inventory. Finally, students conduct a structured interview with persons who work in two of the four previously mentioned occupations. The interview includes questions about the specific duties performed, the degree of stress associated with the position, effects of the work on one's health, major satisfactions and dissatisfactions associated with the work, etc. Students write a summary report about each interview.

Ware and Sroufe (1984a) produced a videotape, "Career Development and Opportunities for Psychology Majors." The tape provides a summary of the first two components of the course. The narrator points out that psychology majors come from a variety of backgrounds and that they select psychology as a major because it

serves one or more personal interests and values. Interviews with four students document those conclusions. The narrator describes the similarities between deciding about a college major and deciding about an occupation. In addition, he states that assessing and developing one's skills are an integral part of career development. Excerpts from interviews with six former students include those who have gone immediately into the job market in business, human services, and collegiate settings and those who have gone to graduate school in psychology or professional school in medicine and law. The contents of the interviews illustrate the general and specific skills required for various occupational pursuits and the variety of career paths available to psychology majors. The program concludes with a summary of the major issues in the program and with an invitation to students to make use of their academic advisors and/or the variety of other available resources. An 18 page booklet, "Career Development and Opportunities for Psychology Majors," (Ware, 1984b) elaborates on the issues in the videotape.

Exploration of graduate and professional school opportunities focuses on post-graduate work in

psychology and related disciplines and the professions of medicine, dentistry, and law. During the semester, four to six invited speakers come to class to describe their work activities, graduate preparation, and career satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Visitors include doctoral level psychologists, a social worker, and a lawyer. The topics of searching for, preparing for, and applying to graduate school in psychology require four, 50-minute periods. I also point out how the principles associated with each process are transferable to professional school. Finally, discussion of issues associated with gaining admission to medical, dental, and law school constitute one class period. This latter feature may be peculiar to Creighton because of the large number of pre-professional students.

Ware and Sroufe (1984b) also produced a videotape, "Pursuing Graduate Study in Psychology," highlighting the factors associated with preparing one's self for graduate school. This tape contains excerpts from interviews with faculty, students, and a graduate school dean. The tape describes the role of personal motivation, research experience, coursework, and field experience for gaining admission to graduate school.

An 18 page booklet, "Pursuing Graduate Study in Psychology," (Ware, 1984c) describes factors associated with searching for, preparing for, and applying to graduate school.

The last component of the course develops job search skills and requires about one-third of the semester. Lectures and activities focus on developing skills in assertive communication, decision making, job hunting, resume writing, and interviewing. Moreover, all students submit a formal resume, and they may participate in a videotaped, simulated job interview. Formal, written feedback provides each student with an evaluation of his/her interview performance. Each student has an opportunity to view his/her taped interview.

Texts for the course include Figler (1979) and Super and Super (1982). Requirements also include readings from portions of Figler (1975), Powell (1978), Woods (1979) and other selected articles.

Readers interested in formal studies on the effectiveness of this career course are referred to Ware (in press), Ware (1981), Ware (1982b), and Ware and Beischel (1979). The following are additional indices of the course's effectiveness. The Psychology

Department at Creighton University has offered this career course at least once a year since the spring of 1977 to junior and senior psychology majors. The course has established itself as a stable offering by the department. Student demand for the course has required that it be offered up to three times a year. The student demand for and response to the course confirms and extends the results of the quantitative evidence.

I have taught the career course at least once a year since the Spring, 1980. The course has provided experience that might be useful to those who would like to develop a similar course. The following items reflect concerns you may have about yourself, colleagues, and students.

1. "I wasn't trained in the area of career development." Welcome to the club. My training at the master's and doctoral levels was in general psychology. My pre-requisite credentials included: a) a perception that students had a need, b) a desire to do something about that need, c) an absence of someone else to do it, d) an administration that was willing to give me a chance. I will discuss the the issue of academic resistances below. Armed with the conditions just

described, I proceeded to read, talk to others, read, and continue the cycle indefinitely thereafter. In the absence of the luxury of being retrained in a graduate program, you must be prepared to do it on your own. The time afforded by a sabbatical would be ideal, otherwise summer, weekends, and evenings are the likely times. Psychology colleagues in university counseling centers, as well as other college student personnel officials (e.g., the director of the placement office) can be of particular assistance.

2. "What is a workable outline or framework for the course?" Perhaps my greatest frustration in preparing to teach the career course was the absence of structure. When I began, everything I read seemed equally important. I suggest that the course description presented earlier in this manuscript provides one set of goals and arrangement of topics.

3. "Will a career course have academic credibility?" I approached the career course as I would any other course. In general, academic courses require scholarly preparation and implementation. A career course is no different (Ware, 1982a). The career course, in particular, can be modeled after courses having a laboratory component. Thus, the course

emphasizes both thinking and doing. Little is gained by arguing before the fact. The proof of the courses's academic merit is in the product.

4. "You can't assign grades in a course that emphasizes personal development." Although I have heard many individuals argue that grading is not possible in this type of course, I disagree. The basis for grading is the same as any other course. Once objectives are specified, grades are assigned according to the degree to which those objectives are achieved. I will admit considerable disappointment in assigning low grades, but as a popular television commercial puts it, "They earn it."

5. "Won't students treat this course less seriously than others?" There is a genuine risk in teaching the career course the way that I have. The less pressure and more personal nature of the course often results in students assigning it a lower priority among the many demands in their schedules. However, I have found that a clear and formal structuring of activities, exercises, and assignments contributes markedly to maintaining student involvement. I set realistic deadlines and stick to them. I have discovered that most students respond favorably to such

structure, particularly when they have trouble doing so themselves.

6. "There should be few time demands on the instructor's time outside of class." My experience has been that a successful course will require considerable time outside of class. One must be prepared to spend time with students in individual conferences outside of class, to meet the needs of students who are referred by members of the class and one's colleagues, and to develop resource materials for majors who can't or won't take the course.

One caveat. I strongly recommend establishing a close working relationship with members of the local counseling center. There will be some students whose problems exceed your skill level and time limitations. Be aware of seductive feelings such as, "I'm the only one who can help or understand him/her," or "This student is too sensitive for referral," or "No one else can empathize with him/her the way I can." Such feelings are commonplace and making referrals can be one of the most important actions that you take.

References

Figler, H. (1975). PATH: A career workbook for liberal arts students. Cranston: Carroll Press Publishers.

Figler, H. (1979). The complete job-search handbook. New York: Holt,Rinehart and Winston.

Harrington, T., & O'Shea, A. (1980). The Harrington/O'Shea system for decision-making. Moravia: Chronicle Guidance Publication.

Holland, J. (1974). The self-directed search. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Lunneborg, P. (1983, August). Strategies at a larger public university. In J. Winer (Chair), Managing and assessing students' career needs. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Anaheim.

Powell, C. (1978). Career planning and placement today. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Rogers, C. (1969). Freedom to learn. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.

Super, D., & Super, C. (1982). Opportunities in psychology. Skokie: VGM Career Horizons.

U.S. Department of Labor. (1977). Dictionary of occupational titles. (4th Ed.) Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Labor. (1982). Occupational outlook handbook, 1982-83 edition, Washington: D.C. Government Printing Office.

Ware, M. E. (1981). Evaluating a career development course: A two year study. Teaching of Psychology. 8, 67-71.

Ware, M. E. (1982a). Acknowledging the preparation of students for post graduate life. Teaching of Psychology. 9, 40-42.

Ware, M. E. (1982b). Providing perspectives and skills for career selection. Omaha, NE: Creighton University, Department of Psychology. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 210 595)

Ware, M. E. (1983, August). Strategies at a smaller private university. In J. Winer (Chair), Managing and assessing students' career needs. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Anaheim.

Ware, M. E. (1984a). A program of career development for undergraduate psychology majors. NPA Forum. 24, 13-17.

Ware, M. E. (1984b). Career development and opportunities for psychology majors. (Available from [Mark E. Ware; Department of Psychology;

Creighton University; Omaha, NE])

Ware, M. E. (1984c). Pursuing graduate study in psychology. (Available from [Mark E. Ware; Department of Psychology; Creighton University; Omaha, NE])

Ware, M. E. (in press). Assessing a career development course for upper-level college students. Journal of College Student Personnel

Ware, M. E., & Beischel, M. L. (1979). Career development: Evaluating a new frontier for teaching and research. Teaching of Psychology. 6, 210-213.

Ware, M. E. (Producer), & Sroufe, P. G. (Producer-Director). (1984a). Career development and opportunities for psychology majors. [Videotape]. Omaha, NE: Creighton University.

Ware, M. E. (Producer), & Sroufe, P. G. (Producer-Director). (1984b). Pursuing graduate study in psychology. [Videotape]. Omaha, NE: Creighton University.

Woods, P. (Ed.) (1979). The psychology major: Training and employment strategies, Washington: American Psychological Association.